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SUBJECT: CHARGE'S OCTOBER 31 VISIT TO GOMA IN THE AFTERMATH
OF THE FARDC'S COLLAPSE IN NORTH KIVU

REF: KINSHASA 960

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Samuel Brock for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Goma remains calm, but with fewer people on the streets. The FARDC has effectively collapsed in the region, leaving Nkunda in control of large swaths of area north and west of Goma. Nkunda will most likely not attack Goma, as the city does not threaten his operations in North Kivu. Nkunda may try to curry favor with the international community by presenting himself as the "protector of international aid organizations." The CNDP is expected to establish its own administrative apparatus in the region, potentially spawning a kind of "Congolese Kosovo." Unless the EU sends a military force to the region, there is no military solution; but the price that the GDRC would have to pay for a negotiated settlement--perhaps by appointing Nkunda as a government minister or a regional military commander--may be too high for Kabila. The question of how the FDLR will react in the CNDP's newly-conquered territory is still open. The status quo could go on indefinitely. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On October 31, Charge accompanied A/S Jendayi Frazer, NSC Africa Director Bobby Pittman, and AF Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution Tim Shortley to Goma to assess the security, political, and humanitarian situation on the ground. SRSG Alan Doss also traveled with the delegation to Goma. Following are Charge's observations on the security and political situation.

Security Situation

¶3. (SBU) Goma appeared calm, but with fewer people on the streets and fewer stores open than normal. Stationary MONUC tanks and soldiers on patrol were a frequent sight on the city's streets. After evaluating the situation, A/RSO and Charge agreed that USG TDYers in Goma should be allowed to return to Goma during daylight hours. Post's EAC subsequently agreed with this recommendation (reftel).

Political Situation

¶4. (C) The FARDC has almost completely collapsed. The CNDP is now in undisputed control of a vast area to the north and west of Goma. It is probably unlikely that Nkunda would move to take Goma at this point, as the city does not represent a threat to his troops or his recently acquired territory. Most renegade FARDC elements, who engaged in "shooting and looting" have either fled Goma, blended into the local population, or were killed by police officers or the rump Congolese army still loyal to the regime.

15. (C) It is also unlikely that Nkunda will want to risk provoking the international community by engaging directly with MONUC, something that any effort to take Goma would surely entail. MONUC would also protect the Goma Tutsi community, should anti-Tutsi riots erupt. Finally, Nkunda will continue to benefit from a large "fifth column" of CNDP supporters in Goma, a force he can call on as needed to counter anti-Tutsi violence.

16. (C) Nkunda suddenly has a tremendous new source of income and good will: his forces control all access to and from IDP camps and the CNDP can now extract "taxes" from humanitarian organizations bringing in supplies and food. Alternatively, Nkunda could opt to cultivate good relations with the aid organizations by exempting them from "taxation" and protecting them and the IDP's from bandits and other predators. Nkunda will probably burnish his image with the international community as a "protector of the NGO's and IDP's." The CNDP also controls the trade routes for the lucrative mineral trade between Uganda/Rwanda and the DRC, and will now have much easier access to arms through these countries.

17. (C) The CNDP territory will, of course, remain outside the jurisdiction of the GDRC. The rebel group will probably name CNDP mayors, police chiefs and administrators, replacing whatever national and provincial authorities were in place before October 29. In short, the territory could become a kind of "Congolese Kosovo."

18. (C) Absent an EU-led military force, there is no way to dislodge Nkunda militarily. Negotiations therefore present

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the only real path to bring this area back under GDRC control. The cost to the GDRC would be high--perhaps making Nkunda a minister or regional military commander--a price that Kabila is probably unwilling to pay. Thus, the status quo could continue indefinitely.

19. (C) A big question remains unanswered: what will be the fate of FDLR forces in the CNDP's newly-expanded territory? While it is difficult to predict at the moment, the answer is probably mixed. Some, particularly those with commercial operations and who were not directly involved in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, may enter into business relationships with the CNDP. Others, with more to lose or with an ideological viewpoint, may choose to fight the CNDP.
BROCK